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ABSTRACT

Two hundred Iowa secondary schools were surveyed in the spring of 1975 to determine the extent and nature of curricular and cocurricular speech programs; a 63.5% response rate was obtained. Results in five major areas--curriculum, cocurricular activities, teacher characteristics, student teachers, and facilities and equipment--are summarized in this report. Nearly 93% of the schools surveyed offered at least one course in speech. About half of the speech teachers had an academic major in speech. The typical teacher could expect to teach English and speech, to coach debate, individual events, or drama, and to have an extensive cocurricular work load. The majority of the curricular programs were traditional in nature, with major units centering on various types of speaking activities. However, there was an apparent shift toward the inclusion of more instruction in intrapersonal, interpersonal, and small group behavior in the basic course. These and other findings were found to be related to the size of the school. (AA)

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SECONDARY SPEECH COMMUNICATION EDUCATION

IN IOWA

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In the middle and late 1960's the Speech Association of America sponsored a group interested in involving secondary teachers in the organization. This Secondary School Interest Group asked some of its members to survey and report on the status of speech education at the high school level in several states.[1] Although that special interest group has since disappeared, the speech communication Association has once again affirmed its dedication to the non-college teacher of Speech with the establishment of the States Advisory Council. The Council elected officers and established guidelines and goals at the December 1974 Speech Communication Association Convention in Chicago.[2] The officers and the Council have since received voting privileges and financial support from the national organization.

In order to effectively develop materials, workshops, and guidelines to facilitate the growth of secondary speech communication programs, the States Advisory Council must be aware of what curricular and cocurricular programs currently exist, who teaches them, how they are taught, and how they fit into the total secondary curriculum. Only after we examine and compare the data generated by current surveys can we begin to generalize about the existing status of secondary school speech communication education.

In a summary of state surveys in 1969, Brooks concluded that the secondary schools in the Midwest had a number of similarities in their curricular and cocurricular speech programs.[3] He offered the following conclusions: (1) nearly 80-90% of all schools offered some sort of speech instruction; (2) around 15-25% of all schools required a speech course for graduation; (3) the first course in speech is typically a general course centered around types of public speeches; (4) only a small minority of high school students receive any sort of speech training; (5) some important speech objectives of particular relevance to today's societal needs are absent from the typical course; and (6) high school speech courses will reflect these needed changes in objectives and content as our teacher training programs in speech education are updated and made more relevant.[4] Part of the function of our survey was to compare these conclusions and descriptions with the current secondary programs in Iowa.

With these observations in mind we surveyed the Iowa high schools during the spring of 1975. What follows is a summary of the results of that survey. The implications that are offered can be confirmed or rejected through comparisons with similar surveys from various regions. We believe, however, that the secondary speech programs in Iowa remain quite typical of those found in other midwestern states.

Method

We divided the schools in Iowa into four groups: those with senior high populations of 0-199, 200-499, 500-899, and 900 and above. Surveys were sent to all one hundred schools in the top two categories; fifty-six in the 500-899 range and forty-four in the largest category. The majority of Iowa's 526 schools fall into the two smallest categories. Fifty schools were randomly

selected from each of these two to receive the survey. We received a 63.5% usable response which was similar for all categories: 62% were returned from the smallest schools; 74% in the 200-499 range; 57.1% in the 500-899 range; 56.4% from the largest schools.

The questionnaire was divided into five major areas: curriculum, co-curricular activities, teacher, student teachers, and facilities and equipment. Although space prohibits a comprehensive analysis of all our findings, we will summarize the more relevant results from each area.[5]

Curriculum

Nearly all (92.8%) of the schools surveyed reported that they offered a basic speech course at the secondary level. With a few exceptions, that course was offered on a semester or trimester basis, a trend which Mosvick called "a relatively new phenomena of the last 5-7 years which has gone relatively undetected in speech education research."[6] Although we do not agree that this trend has gone undetected, his observation of the shift is confirmed by our study. Over a third (38.4%) of those schools required the basic speech course for graduation. This is where one of the first obvious differences relating to school size was found. Less than 20% of the smallest size group require a speech course while nearly 50% of the largest size group require such a course.

The average class size was also directly related to the size of the school. The teachers in the larger schools are faced with individual classes twice as large as those in the smaller schools. The size of the school also seems to be a factor in determining when the student is allowed or encouraged to enroll in the course. Nearly half (45%) of the students enrolled in the basic speech course in the smaller schools are juniors or seniors. Nearly all (91.7%)

of the students enrolled in the basic course in the largest schools are freshmen or sophomores.

One of the most dramatic differences between the larger and smaller schools is the number of advanced offerings in speech. Only a third of the smallest schools offer any type of advanced speech course, while all of those schools in the largest category offer advanced courses.

While the material reported thus far in this section may give us some cause for hope, the following two areas do not. Less than 10% of the teachers in the smaller schools use behavioral or instructional objectives consistantly in their classrooms. Only a third of those teachers in the largest category use them consistently, and many teachers reported doing so only because they were already in the curriculum guide. This indicates that secondary teachers are not as familiar with or committed to the use of behavioral objectives as the participants in the recent Memphis Conference on Speech Education concluded.[7] Perhaps more work still needs to be done to establish and justify the utilization of behavioral objectives in curriculum development.

The second area of concern from the most frequently used textbooks reported. Many of the teachers indicated that they did not use textbooks for the basic course. While this may be cause for concern, the reports from those who do use a textbook are more worthy of concern. Basic Drama Projects and 38 Basic Speech Experiences are the two most popular textbooks in Iowa. Both texts have little relevance to students, our profession, or current society and are unsuitable for a basic speech communication course. The Stage and the School, The Art of Speaking and Person to Person were also used by a number of schools. Many teachers commented that no one text seemed to adequately meet their needs.

The content of the basic speech course also varies greatly. A number of the larger school systems have curriculum guides which include theory and activities for interpersonal, group and public communication. The content of the basic speech course in those schools with student populations of less than 900, however, is generally determined solely by the speech teacher. While a few of these basic courses emphasized drama, interpersonal communication or oral interpretation, most were developed as traditional public speaking courses.

Cocurricular Program

Individual events programs, debate and drama programs are widely accepted in Iowa secondary schools. For example, 84% of schools below 900 students had students participate in oral reading. Of schools in the 500-900 category, 84% had students enter oratory and 76% of the largest schools were said to have an active debate program. However, there was a good deal of unevenness in participation (only 16% of the smallest schools had debate programs; and while 81% of schools in the 500-900 range had student extempers, only 29% of the smallest schools entered extemp speaking divisions).

Among the smallest schools 76% indicated strong preference for contests, while schools in the next size bracket were only 32% strongly in favor of contests with 16% strongly supporting festivals. It may well be that the smallest schools with the most limited budgets need to concentrate on competition and the rewards of winning and bringing home the tangible signs of success and cannot afford the luxury of the festival.

Whether the school believes in and participates in contests, festivals or both, money is a necessity. Over 90% of the schools of less than 900 pupils were able to sustain their individual events programs with less than a 500 dollar budget; 21% of the largest schools allocated between 500-1000 dollars and over 10% spent between 1000 and 1500 dollars.

Debate budgets showed spectacular differences. For example, for all schools of under 500 population almost 88% reported spending less than 500 dollars with none indicating expenses of more than 1000 dollars. Yet nearly 40% of the largest schools reported debate budgets of over 1000 dollars.

Drama budgets seemed to be more evenly distributed. In every school category at least 50% spent less than 500 dollars with only 21% of the largest schools spending over 1000 dollars for their drama programs. For all but the smallest schools approximately 88% of those surveyed send all dramatic production profits back into their programs. Only 58% of the smallest schools, however, reallocate their profits back into their own drama programs.

We have tried to speculate as to the reason for wide participation and large budgets for some schools and little activity or money for others. Our survey tried to isolate one possible cause, the school administration. Fifteen per cent of the smallest schools reported their principals and superintendents did not support their cocurricular program, but no teacher from the largest schools gave such a response. In fact, 52% of the teachers from the largest schools said they received active support from their administrators. We believe it a healthy sign for the future of cocurricular programs that secondary school administrators for the most part respond well to what is happening with speech in their schools.

Teachers

While over three-fourths of the teachers surveyed had either a major or minor in speech, their major teaching load was usually in another academic field. This was especially true of teachers in the smaller schools. Eleven percent of the teachers in the smallest schools teach only speech; 28% in the second category, and 22% in the next category. Sixty-eight percent of the speech teachers in the largest schools teach only speech courses.

Teachers had a good deal of input as to the determination of the content and objectives for the speech/drama classes. Either the speech teacher or a group of teachers made these decisions in 82% of the cases. Only in the largest schools did the individual teachers seem to be involved in joint decision making, primarily with the department chairperson and a group of teachers. The principal determined content in approximately 5% of the cases.

A large majority of the teachers complained of "too much work for one person." The work load referred to is largely brought about by cocurricular demands: play rehearsals, debate trips and after school hours spent with students preparing for contests and festivals. In all categories of school size, this was the problem of greatest concern. When information on the curricular and cocurricular responsibilities of the teacher is examined there seems little doubt that this response is a valid one; it is a warning to those who choose to teach speech at the secondary school level. A final complaint came from teachers in the smaller schools who noted conflicts with sports and music. Teachers of all cocurricular activities often work with the same students and often require the same facilities. The teachers in these schools reported that "the speech teacher's request is honored first--right after athletics and music."

The typical speech teacher, then, can expect to teach English, oral communication either in a speech or English class, be able to plan his/her own curriculum, and have a curricular workload that is too heavy for one teacher, even one trained to teach and work in that area.

Student Teachers

A major reason for conducting this survey was to obtain information that would help us better prepare our students before they enter the secondary schools to student teach. While only 21% of the teachers in the schools with fewer than 500 students had worked with student teachers, 54% of those in the larger schools had

experience with them and had some concrete suggestions regarding the preparation of potential teachers. There are several areas where they thought student teachers are currently inadequately prepared. Although the response from the smallest schools was limited, it is interesting to note that maintaining discipline and assigning grades are the only two areas of inadequate preparation noted. This might be the result of experience with a nontraditional student teacher or it may be a reflection of the academic philosophy of the teachers in the smaller schools surveyed. The major problem indicated by the total response still remains the student teacher's inability to maintain discipline followed closely be difficulties in stimulating low ability students. These problems are followed, in order, by critiquing students' oral activities, using A-V equipment and locating resource material.

When we asked what experiences would be most beneficial to prospective speech teachers the major response was the practice or student teaching experience. The next three experiences recommended also called for direct contact with secondary students: practicum, observation in the secondary classroom, and coaching and directing secondary students in cocurricular activities. Micro teaching with videotape equipment was also considered a valuable experience. Writing units and objectives and planning curriculums were also mentioned as potentially valuable.

The teacher's response to our question regarding what college courses should be required for future speech teachers and for state certification reflected both the diversity of current secondary programs that was noted in the curriculum section and the increasing diversity and complexity of our field. A course in Public Speaking is still considered central to our discipline. Oral Interpretation was also quite high on the list of priorities. It is somewhat surprising to note that both of these courses were considered less important by teachers in the smaller schools than by those in the largest schools where we find the greatest program diversity.

A course in speech methods was third on the list followed by courses in mass media, interpersonal communication, acting, debate, play production, and drama. Several other courses received scattered support. Many teachers suggested that the broadest possible background be obtained and that the potential teacher should not attempt to specialize in a specific academic area.

The teachers surveyed were overwhelmingly committed to the idea that a potential speech teacher must have a teaching minor (95.8%). Although a number of potential minors were suggested, 90.8% stated that the speech teacher was best equipped if he/she had an English minor.

Facilities and Equipment

Most speech classrooms are relatively well equipped with the conventional audio-visual equpment. Ninety-one percent of the teachers surveyed have access to tape recorders, films, film projectors, slide projectors, and overhead projectors. Video-tape equipment is available to 85% of the teachers and 44% of those surveyed have movie cameras available for student use.

Facilities for cocurricular activities are not as adequate. Theatre equipment and facilities seem to be a major problem for secondary speech and drama teachers. Seventy-two percent of the schools have some sort of essential dimming equipment while only 17% have access to a construction shop, area or equipment. In addition, 46.6% of the teachers are still trying to run a drama program in a "gymnatorium" and 11% in a "cafetorium." The problem of trying to rehearse while the wrestlers are practicing on the stage and the basketball team is practicing on the court is still of critical concern to many secondary speech and drama teachers.

Those teachers surveyed expressed desperate pleas for their own theatre, for bigger and better stages, more adequate wing space, storage areas, more and better lighting equipment and a decent place to work with their students. While it may be

natural for directors to want bigger and better facilities, the intensity of the responses to this section of the questionnaire indicates that the lack of adequate theatre facilities is a major problem for secondary teachers.

Summary and Implications

We assumed, when we began this survey that the secondary speech programs in Iowa were typical of those in other midwestern states and perhaps of most states. After surveying the schools to determine what curricular and cocurricular programs currently exist, who teaches them, how they are taught, and how they fit into the total secondary curriculum we still believe that assumption to be valid. A major difference in speech education programs does exist, as we had hypothesized, based on the size of the student population. A required speech course, for example, is more than twice as likely to be found in the larger schools than in schools with a student population of less than 500. Students take speech earlier in the larger schools and are more likely to have the option of taking additional speech courses. The larger schools are also much more likely to have active debate and extensive drama programs.

About half of the speech teachers have an academic major in speech. The typical teacher can expect to teach English and speech, coach debate, individual events and/or drama, and expect to have an extensive cocurricular work load.

Some changes in secondary speech education become apparent when the results of this survey are compared with previous studies and with the conclusions drawn by Brooks in his 1969 summary of state studies.[8] Nearly 93% of the schools surveyed currently offer at least one course in speech. While around 15-25% of the schools required a speech course in the 1969 survey, 38% of Iowa's schools currently require a speech course for graduation. Over half of the schools with a student population of 500 or more currently require speech which indicates that many more students are re-

ceiving speech training today than in the 1960's.[9] While this situation can hardly be called ideal, it would appear to be one of the most significant changes in the past several years. The majority of the curricular programs continue to be traditional in nature with major units centering around types of speaking activities. However, there is an apparent shift toward the inclusion of more instruction in intrapersonal, interpersonal and small group behavior in the basic course.

A number of practical applications to teacher training institutions and secondary school speech education programs seem apparent as a result of this study. Teacher training institutions must become more responsive to what is occurring at the secondary level in order to better prepare our students for teaching careers. More attention must be given to actual experiences in the secondary schools. The initial practicum of field experience should continue for a full quarter or semester and should be required early in the speech education major's plan of study. The prospective speech and drama teachers ought to have a continuing experience with secondary students as assistant directors, technical directors, and individual events and debate coaches in the local schools. The student teaching experience should be a full time commitment for a full quarter or semester and must incorporate a wide variety of experiences in both the curricular and cocurricular areas. These three types of direct and extensive experiences with the secondary schools are essential to the adequate preparation of future teachers.

We need to ensure that the sometimes artificial divisions universities draw between speech, theatre, English and other disciplines do not preclude the effective development of competent speech education teachers who will be crossing those same divisions in their secondary teaching careers. Perhaps we even need to consider establishing criteria for language arts certification to replace the traditional state certification areas of English, reading, journalism, and speech. To be adequately prepared for secondary teaching under either structure, our majors need a

strong academic background in a number of areas as well as the actual contact with secondary students discussed above. Courses in interpersonal, group and public communication, composition, linguistics, and literature, oral interpretation, acting, stagecraft and directing, film, broadcasting and mass media, directing cocurricular activities, English methods and speech methods are all relevant to future speech communication teachers.

Although this study indicates that secondary speech communication programs have been growing over the past several years, secondary teachers must be willing to adapt those programs to meet future demands if that growth is to continue. The increasing public dissatisfaction with our educational systems, increasing financial problems, and growing public and educational support for the "back to basics" movement may seriously threaten many of our secondary speech programs. To meet these pressures secondary teachers should establish concise and meaningful goals and objectives for their curricular and cocurricular programs. New developments and current communication theory might well be incorporated into the basic speech communication course. Even though much of what we do may be performance oriented, the basic speech communication course needs a solid academic content as its base. Teachers who are aware of current trends in our discipline and secondary textbooks which reflect those trends will aid in this development.

Speech and theatre activities are important but they must not be allowed to take the place of curricular speech instruction. Teachers should continue to ensure that these activities are cocurricular and not extra-curricular. The incredible time commitment required of any one teacher assigned to these activities is another area of concern. Speech teachers must find ways to share these responsibilities with other teachers, student teachers or non-professional assistants. Additional speech faculty, released time rather than additional pay for these activities, and more

selectivity in the activities the teacher directs are other possibilities. Teachers should be cautioned not to devote such extreme amounts of time and energy to co-curricular activities that they do not have enough left to devote to similar curricular development. To become caught in such a dilemma almost certainly means the demise of either the curricular or cocurricular speech education program at the secondary school level.

Footnotes

[1]Mardel Ogilvie, "The Status of Speech in Secondary Schools: A Symposium," Speech Teacher, 18 (January 1969), 39.

[2]Barbara Lieb-Brilhart, "Communication Notes," Spectra, 11 (February 1975), 9.

[3]Brooks, William D., "The Status of Speech in Secondary Schools: A Summary of State Studies," Speech Teacher, 18 (November 1969), 276-81.

[4]Brooks, p. 281.

[5]Complete data and tables available from authors upon request.

[6]Roger K. Mosvick, "Minnesota Speech Education: Review and Prospect," Speech Association of Minnesota Journal, 2 (1975), 2.

[7]Newcombe, P. Judson and R. R. Allen, eds., New Horizons for Teacher Education in Speech Communication: Report of the Memphis Conference of Teacher Educators (Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Company, 1974), pp. 53-54.

[8]Brooks, p. 281.

[9]Brooks, pp. 280-281.

TABLE 1

Percentage of Schools Requiring A Speech Course

SCHOOL SIZE	REQUIRED	NOT REQUIRED
0-199	19.4	80.6
200-499	29.7	70.3
500-899	59.4	40.6
900-up	48.0	52.0
AVERAGE	38.4	61.6

TABLE 2

Percentage of Respondents Using Behavioral Objectives in Speech/Drama Classes

SCHOOL SIZE	FREQUENCY OF USE				
	CONSISTENTLY	MOST OF THE TIME	SOME OF THE TIME	SELDOM	NEVER
0-199	7.7	57.7	15.4	0.0	19.2
200-499	9.4	37.5	46.9	3.1	3.1
500-899	21.8	31.3	31.3	15.6	0.0
900-up	36.0	28.0	32.0	0.0	4.0
AVERAGE	18.2	38.3	32.2	5.2	6.1

TABLE 3

Most Frequently Used Textbooks Reported by Responding Institutions

TEXT	SCHOOL SIZE				
	0-199	200-499	500-899	900-up	TOTAL
Basic Drama Projects	5	8	0	1	14
Basic Speech Experiences	2	6	3	0	11
The Stage and the School	0	3	4	3	10
The Art of Speaking	1	3	4	1	9
Person to Person	1	3	2	1	7
The New American Speech	1	2	3	0	6
Speech in Action	2	1	1	1	5
Play Production in the H.S.	1	1	2	0	4
Speech in American Society	0	1	2	0	3
Speaking by Doing	1	1	1	0	3

TABLE 4

Percentage of Respondents Using Behavioral Objectives For Cocurricular Activities

SCHOOL SIZE	FREQUENCY OF USE				
	CONSISTENTLY	MOST OF THE TIME	SOME OF THE TIME	SELDOM	NEVER
0-199	16.0	48.0	20.0	4.0	12.0
200-499	8.6	28.6	40.0	8.5	14.3
500-899	9.7	16.1	32.3	29.0	12.9
900-up	26.9	34.7	23.0	7.7	7.7
AVERAGE	14.5	30.8	29.9	12.8	12.0

TABLE 5

Percentage of Respondents Reporting Severe Problems Faced by Speech Teachers

SIZE	TYPE OF PROBLEM						
	DISCIPLINE	TOO MUCH WORK FOR ONE PERSON	ACADEMICALLY DEFICIENT STUDENTS	LACK OF STUDENT INTEREST	POOR FACILITIES	LACK OF ADMIN. SUPPORT	OTHER
0-199	3.2	48.4	3.2	19.4	9.7	6.4	9.7
200-499	1.8	37.7	0.0	13.2	20.8	5.7	20.8
500-899	6.3	50.0	3.1	12.5	12.5	12.5	3.1
900-up	4.5	54.5	4.5	9.2	9.2	13.6	4.5
AVERAGE	3.5	45.6	2.1	13.6	14.4	9.3	11.5

TABLE 6

Percentage of Respondents Reporting Areas of Indequate Student Teacher Preparation

SCHOOL SIZE	TYPE OF PROBLEM						
	DISCIPLINE	STIMULATING LOW ABILITY STUDENTS	ASSIGNING GRADES	CRITIQUING ORAL ACTIVITIES	USING A-V MATERIAL	LOCATING RESOURCE MATERIAL	OTHER
0-199	50.0	0.0	50.0				
200-499	24.0	32.0	12.0	8.0	4.0	8.0	12.0
500-899	37.4	12.5	12.5	18.7	6.3	6.3	6.3
900-up	18.6	18.6	14.0	9.3	9.3	9.3	20.9
AVERAGE	24.4	20.9	14.0	10.5	7.0	8.1	15.1

TABLE 7

Percentage of Respondents Recommending Courses Required for Speech Education Majors

SCHOOL SIZE	TYPE OF COURSE *								
	PS	OI	SM	IC	ACT	MED	DEB	PP	DR
0-199	41.9	32.2	19.4	16.1	19.4	12.9	9.7	9.7	6.5
200-499	40.5	43.2	40.5	24.3	24.3	18.9	16.2	18.9	13.5
500-899	53.1	31.3	37.5	28.1	28.1	43.8	25.0	16.6	6.3
900-up	68.0	68.0	48.0	60.0	52.0	48.0	48.0	0.0	12.0
AVERAGE	49.6	42.4	36.0	30.4	29.6	31.2	23.2	12.0	9.6

* Key to Course Type:
PS = Public Speaking
OI = Oral Interpretation
SM = Speech Methods
IC = Interpersonal Communication
ACT = Acting
MED=Media Course
DEB=Debate
PP= Parliamentary Procedure
DR= Drama